

Veterinary Nurse

Veterinary nurses (vet nurses) help veterinary surgeons (vets) treat and care for sick and injured animals. Although most vet nurses work mainly with small animals, in some cases they care for farm animals, horses or zoo animals.

The Work

You could be:

- holding animals and keeping them calm while the vet examines them
- preparing animals for operations and sterilising surgical instruments
- helping with operations and taking x-rays
- taking care of sick animals, and giving injections and drugs under the supervision of the vet
- helping deal with emergencies
- carrying out straightforward laboratory tests and preparing samples for outside laboratories
- giving advice to owners about looking after their animals
- checking stocks and ordering drugs
- answering phones and keeping records up to date.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the size of company or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Salaries for registered veterinary nurses are normally between £22,000 and £32,000 a year.

Conditions

- Most work is inside, but you may have to work outside at times, especially when treating larger animals.
- It may be necessary to visit farms and zoos to treat animals.
- It can be dirty, noisy and smelly.
- There may be a risk of attack from nervous, scared or aggressive animals.
- Working hours may include weekends and evenings on a rota basis.
- You may sometimes be on call for emergencies.
- Part time work is common.

Getting In

- Entry can be very competitive. You would get in either through a trainee post, a Modern Apprenticeship, or by studying for a qualification.
- To get a trainee post with a vet you usually need 5 subjects at National 5 including English, Maths and a science subject.

- You could get in through a Modern Apprenticeship in Veterinary Nursing at SCQF Level 7. Typically you will need National 5 English, Maths and a science subject.
- You can take a degree in Veterinary Nursing at SRUC. Entry requirements are 4 Highers at BBBB including one from Biology (or Human Biology), Chemistry or Physics and an English based subject, plus National 5 English, Maths and a science subject.
- At least 10 days work experience in a vet practice is desirable and necessary for some courses. For the degree course you require 4 weeks' work experience.
- You need to be fit as there is a lot of standing, lifting, bending and holding animals.
- You might need a tetanus vaccination.

You could work for a vet in private practice, an animal welfare society such as the PDSA (People's Dispensary for Sick Animals), a zoo or wildlife park, a research centre or a university veterinary school.

What Does It Take

You need to be:

- calm and confident when handling animals
- patient and caring when dealing with animals and their owners
- able to talk to owners from a wide range of backgrounds
- well organised, practical and responsible
- able to deal with mess and the physical demands of the job
- able to work on your own as well as with other colleagues
- resilient, to deal with upsetting situations.

You should not be squeamish, as you will have to:

- treat injured animals
- clean wounds and give injections
- help with surgery
- clean up excrement, vomit and blood
- help to put some animals to sleep.

Training

- If you start work without a vet nursing qualification, you would train on the job, with part time study at college.
- You would work towards the RCVS Veterinary Nursing Level 3 Diploma, which would take up to three years to complete.
- Once you have qualified, either with the RCVS Diploma or a degree, you register with the RCVS as a newly-qualified veterinary nurse.
- For the Modern Apprenticeship at SCQF Level 7 you work towards either a Lantra Award Diploma specialising in either Small Animal or Equine, or a VetSkill VTEC Diploma specialising in either Companion Animal or Equine. You will also need to achieve an additional enhancement qualification at SCQF Level 6, which could be for example, an SQA in Emergency First Aid at Work. The MA takes 3 years and once complete you'd become a Registered Veterinary Nurse, with the RCVS.

- After completing the Modern Apprenticeship, you could go on to further study at HND or degree level.
- After qualifying as a vet nurse, you need to take short training courses to keep up to date with new developments through a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme.

Getting On

- With experience you may become a senior or head vet nurse, or a practice manager.
- You may choose to specialise in a particular area of vet nursing, for example with horses.
- You may move into training, teaching and lecturing to vet nurse students.
- There may be opportunities to work with pharmaceutical companies on drug trials.
- There can be opportunities overseas for qualified vet nurses.

Contacts

British Veterinary Association (BVA)

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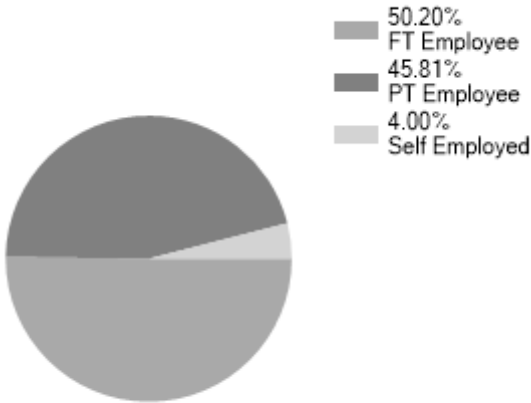
Email: scotland@lantra.co.uk

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Statistics

Employment Status UK %

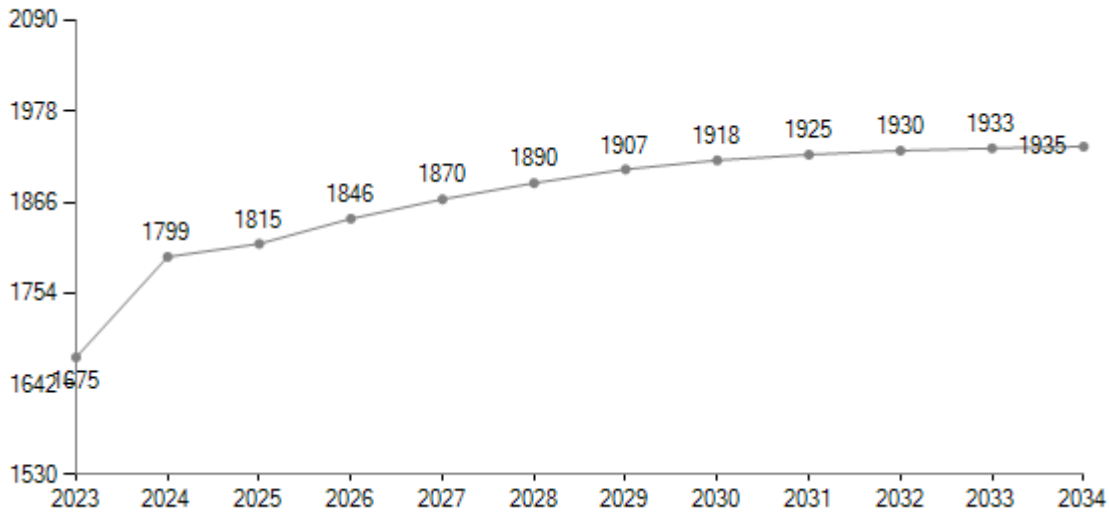


Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

LMI data powered by [LMI for All](#)

Predicted Employment in Scotland



LMI data powered by [Lightcast](#)